

# Ukrainians fleeing war granted free access to NHS healthcare

- Changes coming into force today (Thursday 17 March) will also cover any treatment that has taken place since the start of the Russian invasion.
- The UK remains the second-largest humanitarian donor to Ukraine and has provided over 1.8 million items of medical supplies to the country.

From today Ukrainians fleeing their home country will be guaranteed free access to NHS healthcare, including hospital services, GP and nurse consultations, urgent care centres and injury units.

As part of the UK's offer to those Ukrainians coming to the UK, we have committed to providing full access to a range of public services, including doctors, schools and full local authority support. They will also be offered Covid vaccines and medical screenings. The new legislative measures introduced today will ensure Ukrainians who are in the UK lawfully can access the NHS on a similar basis as other UK residents.

Those benefitting will include any Ukrainian who:

- uses an alternative temporary visa route outside of the family or sponsorship routes;
- is on a family or sponsored route to England
- chooses to extend their visit or seasonal worker visa temporarily, without going through the Immigration Health Surcharge system; or
- is in the process of switching visas

The changes, made in regulations laid today, cover any NHS treatment that started on or after 24 February 2022, the date the full-scale Russian invasion began, providing support to as many people as possible.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

It's our moral duty to ensure any Ukrainian arriving in England, after being forced out of their home country by the Russian invasion is able to access the healthcare they might need, without worrying about the cost.

We have acted swiftly to provide substantial humanitarian aid to Ukraine, and we stand shoulder to shoulder with our international partners. Those in need of care will be treated by our incredible NHS staff as we welcome them to this country.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The people of Ukraine are facing unimaginable suffering and trauma

at the hands of Putin's barbaric regime.

We are providing a safe haven for some of those people and as soon as they arrive in England they will be able to access the support they need, including healthcare, education, benefits and the right to work – helping to provide some stability at a difficult time.

These changes form part of the government's wider humanitarian response to the Ukraine crisis. The UK government has now delivered more than 1.8 million medical items, including wound care packs, equipment for intensive care and vital medicines.

On Monday, 21 Ukrainian children with cancer were evacuated to England and have since been triaged at seven NHS hospitals where they are receiving lifesaving treatment.

More than 6,100 visas have been granted through the Ukraine Family Scheme and, for those with valid Ukrainian passports, the government has removed the need to attend an in-person appointment to conduct biometric checks before travelling to the UK.

Since Monday, people in the UK have been able to register their interest to sponsor a named Ukrainian under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, with more than 150,000 people registering.

The government has provided £400 million in humanitarian and economic aid to Ukraine and neighbouring countries, along with defensive anti-tank and anti-aircraft weaponry.

- The exemption regulations are due to be reviewed in six months.
- Details on the NHS migrant charging policy can be found here: [NHS entitlements: migrant health guide](#).
- Ukrainian residents in the UK unlawfully are not covered by these measures. The government is clear however that urgent treatment will not be withheld – even when the visitor has indicated that they cannot pay.
- Free healthcare for those accompanying people medically evacuated to the UK for treatment will be limited to needs which arise during their stay – pre-existing conditions that worsen and those which develop in the UK.